

Message Text

SECRET

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61
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DPW-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 OMB-01 DRC-01 SAJ-01 /116 W

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R 270443Z DEC 73
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0501
INFO USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMCONGEN HONG KONG

S E C R E T TAIPEI 7650

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, TW
SUBJECT: PREMIER WARNS TAIWANESE INDEPENDENCE SUPPORTERS

1. IN HIS SPEECH TO THE ANNUAL CONSTITUTION DAY (DEC 25) MEETING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, PREMIER CHIANG CHING-KUO "ADVISED" THOSE WHO DISSEMINATE "IMPROPER STATEMENTS" ABOUT TAIWANESE INDEPENDENCE THAT THE TIME HAS COME TO "WAKE UP" OR BE "THOROUGHLY DEFEATED." CALLING "SO-CALLED TAIWANESE INDEPENDENCE" A TRICK OF A FEW "SMALL POLITICIANS", CCK SAID TAIWAN WAS THE LOST TERRITORY RESTORED TO CHINA AT THE END OF WORLD WAR II AND RHETORICALLY ASKED: "IS THERE ANYONE ON TAIWAN WHO DID NOT COME FROM THE MAINLAND?"

2. CCK'S WARING IS NOT CONTAINED IN THE OFFICIAL WRITTEN TEXT OF HIS SPEECH (WE HAVE NOTED IN OTHER REPORTS HIS TENDENCY TO ADD POINTED REMARKS OF HIS OWN TO PREPARED SPEECHES), AND THUS FAR HAS APPEARED ONLY IN THE OFFICIAL KMT NEWSPAPER, CHUNG YANG JIH PAO. OTHER PAPERS PRESUMABLY WERE RELUCTANT TO MENTION THE PREMIER'S STATEMENT WITHOUT OFFICIAL GUIDANCE ON TREATMENT.

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3. COMMENT: IT IS QUITE UNUSUAL FOR THE PREMIER OR ANY SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL TO PUBLICLY MENTION SENTIMENT FOR TAIWANESE INDEPENDENCE (INDEED, WE CANNOT RECALL ANOTHER PUBLIC SPEECH IN WHICH CCK HAS DONE SO), AND WE ARE UNCLEAR AS TO WHAT PROMPTED THE WARNING. WHILE THE US-PRC NORMALIZATION PROCESS HAS STIMULATED CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION OF TAIWAN'S FUTURE AMONG POLITICALLY AWARE INTELLECTUALS -- IN WHICH A JURIDICALLY SEPARATE TAIWAN OFTEN IS ONE OF THE OPTIONS CONSIDERED -- SUCH DISCUSSION TEND TO BE HIGHLY THEORETICAL AND GENERALLY QUITE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF ATTAINING INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF SUCH STATUS.

4. WE HAVE HEARD THAT A LETTER CALLING FOR TAIWAN INDEPENDENCE WAS CIRCULATED ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES RECENTLY AND THAT THE CARRISON COMMAND IS ACTIVELY INVESTIGATING, BUT WE SUSPECT THAT CCK'S REMARKS ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN STIMULATED BY STATEMENTS OF SOME OF THE NON-KMT CANDIDATES IN THE RECENT TAIPEI MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS AND THEIR BOOSTERS SUCH AS KANG NING-HSIANG (SEE POLITICAL NOTES TO THE DESK FOR DECEMBER 5, 1973 AND CHANG CHUNG-HUNG MEMCON OF DECEMBER 7, 1973). WE KNOW THAT THE THINLY VEILED ANTI-GOVERNMENT, ANTI-MAINLANDER CONTENT OF SOME OF THIS ELECTION RHETORIC WAS QUITE NETTLESOME TO BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE KMT, AND HAVE HEARD THAT THE ALLEGED PLANS FOR AN OPPOSITION PARTY TO BE FORMED BY THE INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES WERE A MATTER OF CONSIDERABLE CONCERN. THIS VERY LIKELY EXPLAINS THE REFERENCE TO TRICKS BY A SMALL NUMBER OF POLITICIANS.

5. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN A DISTINCT LIBERALIZATION SINCE CCK TOOK POWER, THE PREMIER'S REMARKS ARE A REMINDER THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS THE ABILITY TO CRACK DOWN HARD IF IT CHOOSES TO DO SO. AT A TIME WHEN THE ROC'S MOST BASIC INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE UNDERGOING STRESS, THE PREMIER UNDOUBTEDLY WANTS TO NIP IN THE BUD ANYTHING THAT CAN DISRUPT UNITY AT HOME. HE PROBABLY HOPES THAT A STERN AND POINTED WARNING WILL OBLViate THE NEED FOR MORE DIRECT OR DRASTIC MEASURES.

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Message Attributes

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